

## **Testimony on behalf of UW System Academic Staff**

### **Before the Special Task Force on UW Restructuring and Operational Flexibilities**

**From Wendy Volz Daniels, MSW, LCSW Clinical Associate Professor UW-Milwaukee,**

**Helen Bader School of Social Welfare**

**May 9, 2012**

Good morning. I am Wendy Volz Daniels, an academic staff member at UW-Milwaukee's Helen Bader School of Social Welfare. On behalf of the more than 13,000 academic staff throughout the UW System, we want to thank all of you for your important work on this task force. Further, we also would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this morning. While many of the issues and areas addressed by our faculty colleagues' this morning are important to the academic staff as well, we would like to spend the next few minutes discussing important topics under the purview of the task force's charge as a result of Act 32 from the unique perspective of the academic staff. The four of us before you have had an opportunity to consult with academic staff colleagues from all of our four year campuses, the Colleges, Extension and UW System office regarding the message we are delivering to you today. Perhaps not surprising, we have much the same perspective even though we are on different campuses and have vastly different roles in assisting each of our campuses to meet its mission of educating students.

I would like to begin our testimony with a brief overview of the Academic Staff in the UW System and introduce my colleagues who are seated next to me this morning. **(Cue power-point and hand-outs)** We are aware that many of you are quite familiar with the unique and diverse roles of academic staff; however, we also know that a couple of you are new to your position and may have some questions about the role of academic staff on our campuses. While we are using a visual from UW-Milwaukee campus, it is representative of similar academic staff roles on all of our campuses. As you may know, the UW System employs approximately 13,533 budgeted FTE academic staff; nearly twice as many as the faculty FTE of 6,771.

Academic staff positions are statutorily defined as professional and administrative personnel other than faculty and classified staff, in positions that are unique to institutions of higher education. Often people are familiar with the roles of faculty and classified staff but are not as familiar with the roles of academic staff in supporting the mission of the university. 75% of the academic staff on our campuses are categorized as either professionals, instructional academic staff or research academic staff. Examples of professional positions illustrated on the overhead visual include the staff who provide services to students from before their acceptance and admission to our campuses to post-graduation services such as career services and continuing education, and everything in between including; advisors, librarians, residence hall managers, information managers and student services coordinators to name a few. The work of this task force will have a great impact on this very large group of people working on our campuses.

The work of the academic staff is closely connected to the Wisconsin Idea coined by the University of Wisconsin president Charles Van Hise in 1901 declaring that he would not be "content until the beneficent influence of the university reached every family in the state." This philosophy continues today, focusing the work of all of us in the UW System. However this Idea has expanded to include working relationships within the state, throughout the country and around the world – the boundaries of the university are now the boundaries of the world; and perhaps beyond! Academic staff are an integral part of achieving this mission.

As a teaching academic staff in the social work department, 50% of my position is devoted to developing and supporting field placement opportunities for students in our undergraduate and graduate social work program that commute from communities north of Milwaukee as well as those interested in becoming licensed as school social workers. We currently have several students completing social work field placements as far away as Green Bay to the north, in Portage and Marshfield, in communities along the Hwy 41 and 45 corridors and, perhaps of particular interest to Representative Strachota, students completing field placements in the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center in West Bend as well as Washington County Human Services. Our field placement opportunities expand to all corners of the state, and include out of state opportunities such as at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and in a drug and alcohol clinic in Bristol, England. Our work supports the Wisconsin Idea as well as the UW System's *Growth Agenda for Wisconsin* goals of developing the state's human potential and strengthening communities.

I would now like to yield the floor to my colleague Dave Carlson from UW-Rock County.

Dave introduces himself and gives the floor to Heather Daniels, UW-Madison.

Heather introduces herself and gives the floor to Andrea Cool, UW-Platteville.

Andrea introduces herself.

Andrea continues with an overview of the "campuses' cultural shifts in flexibilities."

Heather discusses the need for flexibilities in spending and provides two recent examples one from UW-Stout and one from UW-Parkside.

Andrea then follows with an example – the Vertical CNC Mill. **(Cue power-point photo)**

Dave provides a summary of three issues specific to academic staff that arose in the UPS discussions.

Wendy provides specific flexibility request from UW-Milwaukee Campus.

Lastly, I would like to briefly address the unique needs of the UW-Madison and Milwaukee campuses to develop their own advisory boards. The details of this request were provided by Chancellors Ward and Lovell earlier this year therefore I will not repeat them at this time. However, I do want to support this request specific to UW-Milwaukee. We are a very unique campus in the UW-System as the only

institution which has a dual mission of “access” and furthering a doctoral research agenda. Both missions are valued equally and are supported in great measures by the academic staff on our campus who provide support services to one of the most diverse student bodies in the UW System and a campus that specifically meets the UW System’s *Growth Agenda for Wisconsin* to develop the human potential by graduating the largest number of Wisconsin residents; many of whom continue to be first generation college students. Your support of this flexibility would be greatly appreciated.

In closing, on behalf of my academic staff colleagues, I would once again like to extend our gratitude for the opportunity to speak with all of you today.

Thank you.